

Ouachita, Ozark and St. Francis National Forests

NEWS

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Ice Storm Recovery Progressing on Ozark National Forest

HOT SPRINGS, AR – Staff on the Ozark National Forest have been successful in opening several recreation areas that had been temporarily closed following the January ice storm.

“Forest employees and crews have been working on getting areas open for about a month now,” said Gary Williams, Ice Storm Recovery Coordinator. “We were able to remove debris and safety hazards from some recreation areas and trails and have re-opened them for public use. I expect that progress will be made each week with areas becoming available to the public as they become safe.”

Many recreation areas were closed for the winter season and are anticipated to be ready for use by, or shortly after, their normal opening date in the spring. It is anticipated that the Lake Wedington Recreation Area will remain closed until May 1st. “The Ozark Highlands Trail Association (OHTA) has worked diligently to clear downed trees from the Ozark Highlands Trail (OHT) from the Lake Fort Smith State Park to Cherry Bend Trailhead on Hwy 23, approximately Mile 37.1,” stated Williams. A few areas remain closed due to dangers posed by unstable or leaning trees and hanging overhead branches.

Forest officials remind visitors that while some areas have been deemed safe for the public, caution is still needed when in forested areas. Even though downed limbs and trees have been cleared from many of our trails, there are still over-hanging hazards that hikers and hunters should continually be on the lookout for as they travel through the forest. “Traveling in the wild lands of your National Forest is never completely safe and now is a good time to remind folks to take those extra precautions that will help make their recreation experience as safe as possible”, Williams stated. Some of these precautions include looking up before sitting down to make sure you are not sitting under a “widow-maker”, placing your campsite in a location that is free of over-hanging hazards, and even wearing a hardhat or helmet is a good idea.

(more)

For more information on open areas on the Ozark National Forest log on to www.aokforests.com or call the U.S. Forest Service ranger district office nearest you. More information on the OHTA and condition reports on the OHT, visit <http://www.hikearkansas.com/ohta.html>.

Recreation Area Status as of March 1, 2009.

Ranger District	Recreation Area	Notes
Big Piney	Haw Creek Falls	Open
	Bayou Bluff	Open
	Moccasin Gap	Open
	Brock Creek Recreation Area and Trails	Open
	Long Pool	Open
	Rotary Ann	Open
	Pedestal Rocks Trail	Closed
	Fairview	Closed
	Alum Cove	Closed
	Richland Creek	Closed
	Sam's Throne	Closed
Boston Mountain *	Natural Dam	Open
	Campbell Cemetery Canoe Access	Open
	Shores Lake Recreation Area	Open
	White Rock Mountain	Concessionaire open – no water available
	Mill Creek Off-Highway-Vehicle Trail	Closed
	Mill Creek Recreation Area	Closed
	Shores Lake-White Rock Loop Trail	Closed
	Lake Wedington Recreation Area	Closed until May 1
Magazine	Sorghum Hollow Horse Camp	Open
	Spring Lake	Closed for winter
	Cove Lake	Open
Pleasant Hill	Redding	Open
	High Bank	Open
	Wolf Pen	Open
	Horsehead Recreation Area	Open
	Ozone	Closed
	Pleasant Hill Shooting Range	Open
Sylamore	Gunner Pool	Open
	Syllamo Trail	Closed
	Ozark Highlands Trail	Closed
	Blanchard Springs Caverns Visitors Information Center and campground	Open
	Barkshed	Open

*All OHV routes above 1400 feet elevation on the Boston Mountain Ranger district, (approximately 110 miles of routes) are closed due to ice storm damage. Volunteers are NOT authorized to clear or reopen these routes using chain saws or other power equipment unless they are Forest Service Sawyer Certified and using all Personal Protective Equipment. Contact the District at 479-667-2191 for additional information.